

SOME NEW BOOKS.

The Deluge Story Tablets.

The pamphlet giving HILPRECHT'S HILPRECHT'S sensational announcement of his discovery of a new fragment of the Babylonian Deluge has just been published in German under the title *Der Neue Fund zur Stauungsgeschichte aus der Tempelbibliothek*. In it the writer has attempted to answer his critics, but it also contains some things which his critics have taught him. This work appeals to a large percentage of the intelligent public because of the Biblical bearing that has been claimed for it. But, as matter of fact, it is simply another fragment of a version of a legend that is already well known through three or four other tablets. It has no special value for the Bible student, for the supposed connections with the Bible story are largely the creation of the writer, as practically all disinterested scholars have testified.

Prof. Hilprecht obtained this fragment of the Deluge tablets at the same time as the only time the story could have entered Canaan was the time when Abraham left his home on the Euphrates and moved westward, for he says it was written in the Isin dynasty, between 2100 and 2000 B. C., and is thus earlier than the tablet dated in the reign of Amen-Zuriga of the First dynasty, which is now preserved among the treasures of the British Museum. Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. This statement evoked prompt attention on the part of Assyriologists, who claimed that the script clearly showed that it belonged to a later period and that its bearing upon the Old Testament story depended upon Hilprecht's restoration, which were not justified by the context.

In answer to the claim of the Assyriologists that the fragment was written in the Cassite period (1800 to 1300 B. C.) Hilprecht used false words. The age of the tablet has already been accepted by five leading American, three English and two German Assyriologists, that is, all experts without exception, who thus far have expressed to me their views on this matter. Immediately all American Assyriologists (except Radford, Hilprecht's collaborator) were written to and asked whether they had expressed an opinion on the age of the tablet. All replied no, except one, but this scholar did not agree with Hilprecht, for he said he could see nothing in the script or the linguistic evidence of the tablet which prevented it from belonging to the period of the first dynasty.

In other words, instead of five leading American Assyriologists, all experts agreeing with Hilprecht, the result of the investigation was that none except Radford agreed with him. It may be of interest to know that this same scholar, who has been quoted thus, there is a third possibility, to regard it as a Neo-Babylonian, that is, sixth century B. C., copy of a first dynasty original.

The fact that some of the signs are made in more than one way points to such a conclusion. Following is a table of signs from tablets, all from Nippur, with which the signs of the Deluge fragment can be compared. This is his own story.

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